

Early Learning and Childcare Guide 2021-22



Introduction

South Ayrshire Council is committed to providing a high quality early years experience for every child. This is a crucial stage in a child's development and helps children to learn as they play. This experience builds on the valuable learning that takes place in and around the home and also promotes the development of other essential skills for life and learning. Our Early Years Centres and Funded Providers offer a nurturing, caring and child friendly environment where practitioners follow national guidelines for the learning and care of children aged 0-5 years encouraging learning through play.

Our Context

South Ayrshire Council will provide 1140 hrs of funded early learning and childcare for all 3 and 4 year olds and eligible 2 year olds. Provision will support flexibility for parents/carers underpinned by the key principles of quality, flexibility, accessibility and affordability.

All providers of funded early learning and childcare are regulated and inspected by the Care Inspectorate.

Early learning and childcare in South Ayrshire is provided on a non-denominational basis. The National Standard for early learning and childcare was published in December 2018. The Standard outlines 10 criteria for providing funded early learning and childcare which will apply to all providers.

When will my child be eligible to start early learning and childcare?

4 Year Olds

If your child's date of birth is on or between **1 March 2017 and 28 February 2018**

They will be eligible for a funded early learning and childcare place from **August 2021**

3 Year Olds

If your child's date of birth is on or between **1 March 2018 and 28 February 2019**

They will be eligible for a funded early learning and childcare place as detailed below:

1 March 2018 - 31 August 2018	August 2021
1 September 2018 - 28 February 2019	The first Monday after their third birthday (unless a public holiday or in-service day)

To be directed to the online application please scan the QR code opposite.



What early learning and childcare is available?

There are 37 early years centres in South Ayrshire; 4 standalone and 33 based in primary schools. There are currently 13 Funded Providers delivering early learning and childcare.

To support delivery of entitlement various patterns of attendance are being offered across the authority. This works out at around 30 hours a week if you use it during school term-time, or around 22 hours a week if you use it year-round. You can access the funded entitlement in Local Authority Early Years Centres, Funded Providers or a blend of both.

A full list of these centres and options available are listed on the online application information page and further information will also be available from South Ayrshire Council's website <https://www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/nurseries-and-childcare/nursery-schools.aspx>



When, where and how do I make an application for a placement?

Early years registration is week of the 8th March 2021. Places for early learning and childcare are not allocated by school catchment areas.

On the application you will be asked to identify your **first**, **second** and **third** choice of centre. It is important that you indicate a **second** or **third** choice as there may be occasions when you cannot access a place in your first choice centre. Applications which do not indicate additional choices are no longer considered for a placement at any other centre and will be held on the waiting list at your first choice centre.

You will also be asked to identify a preference for your child's pattern of attendance.

Blended Placements

When making an application for a blended placement please note that while every effort will be made to meet your needs, there is no guarantee that it will be possible to offer blended places in all cases. The allocation of blended places will be dependent on both settings being able to allocate the places requested. You may end up in a position where one centre is unable to provide the place.

Am I guaranteed the centre of my choice?

Every effort will be made to meet your request at your first choice of centre. This will be dependent on the number of places available and the priority given to applications. All places are allocated in line with the admissions priorities outlined in this guide.

If we are unable to offer you a place at any of your choices Educational Services will contact you with further information.

How are placements allocated?

All places are allocated in line with the admissions priorities outlined in this guide e.g. first priority is given to children who meet the criteria set out in Priority 1, then Priority 2 and so on. The Early Learning and Childcare Admissions Policy sets out the priority criteria applied to all applications. Further information can be accessed using the link below:- <https://www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/nurseries-and-childcare/admissions-policy-1140.aspx>

The information you provide on the application form will help the head teacher /centre manager give the appropriate priority to your application.

Early Years Centres will follow our central

admissions process to ensure that all eligible children have access to a placement within South Ayrshire. Where the Early Years Centre receives more applications than places available a ballot will take place. To ensure that the ballot is fair a member of the local community or Parent Council with no children accessing Early Years for 21-22 will be invited to attend.

Please Note: the offer of a place at an Early Years Centre does not provide priority for entry to Primary 1. Places for Primary 1 will be allocated according to South Ayrshire Council Primary Admissions Policy.

Admissions Policy Priorities

PRIORITY 1	Children in need (as defined by the Children in Scotland Act 1995 and identified by Social Work, Psychological Services and Health Visitors etc.) a Priority One placement must be initiated by a Request for Assistance form and where appropriate a Wellbeing Assessment.
PRIORITY 2	Children who are deferring entry to Primary School.
PRIORITY 3*	Children who reside in South Ayrshire currently attending the Early Years Centre applying for a place within the same centre.
PRIORITY 4	Children who reside in South Ayrshire who will have a sibling(s) accessing early learning and childcare in the same centre.
PRIORITY 5**	Children in ***SIMD decile 1-2 who reside in South Ayrshire.
PRIORITY 6	Children in ***SIMD decile 3-10 parents/carers in work, study or formal training who reside in South Ayrshire (declaration to be completed).
PRIORITY 7	All other children who reside in South Ayrshire.
PRIORITY 8	Children who reside out with the boundary of South Ayrshire Council but within the catchment area of a South Ayrshire Primary School.
PRIORITY 9	Children who reside out with the boundary of South Ayrshire Council.

* Priority 3: Excludes 2 year olds who have purchased sessions.

** Priority 5 There may be circumstances where places are allocated by the Early Years Forum as a result of Requests for Assistance made by Social Work or Health Visitors.

*** The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) provides a wealth of information to help improve the understanding about the outcomes and circumstances of people living in Scotland. To find out more information about SIMD visit the link: <https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/SIMD>

Can my child access early learning and childcare in another authority?

If you would like to access a funded early learning and childcare place for your child out with South Ayrshire Council, you should contact South Ayrshire Educational Services for further information.

When will I find out what placement my child has been allocated?

Once the process of allocating all placements has been completed, parents/carers will receive an email confirming what placement they have been allocated around the middle of **May**.

Do I have to use all the funded hours?

1140 hrs are an entitlement, not a requirement, you can choose to take all or some of the hours available to you. The Head Teacher/Centre Manager will be able to discuss local arrangements with you.



Does my child have to attend an early years centre?

No. Attendance for early learning and childcare is not compulsory; however we encourage regular attendance as children benefit greatly from routine and consistency.

Purchase of Additional Sessions

To support children and families in South Ayrshire, where places are available in our Local Authority Early Years Centres, parents/carers can purchase early learning and childcare sessions in addition to the 1140 hours entitlement. Information can be found on the South Ayrshire website <https://www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/nurseries-and-childcare/purchase-additional-sessions.aspx>

Places still on hold but may return post Covid-19.

Best Start

If you are in receipt of certain benefits and tax credits you may be eligible for a Best Start Grant Early Learning Payment. To apply call 0800 182 2222 or visit mygov.scot/early-learning-payment

Useful Contacts

Educational Services
01292 612162
edservicesELC@south-ayrshire.gov.uk
www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk

Childcare and Recreation Information Service (CARIS)
0345 351 3000 www.families.scot

Care Inspectorate
Compass House 11 Riverside Drive
DUNDEE DD1 4NY
01382 207 100
www.careinspectorate.com